

Relational Circuits Checklist

Belonging Module of Thriving Recovery

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Includes items from the *Lehman Relational Connection Circuit Checklist* by Karl Lehman M.D. Used by permission. Beta Version 2.2

Overview

Our minds and brains are designed to live in a relational world where everything is in **shalom** (peace). This Hebrew word means everything is in the right relationship, at the right time, in the right place, at the right strength and in the right amount for God and people. In the Life Model we call this being synchronized. At the center of this synchronization are our brain's relational circuits. If we lose our peace (particularly in relationships) these relational circuits can start to shut down. With our vital relational circuits partly or deeply off, problems get bigger, we can treat people like objects, our cravings become monsters, we can deeply hurt those we love, expressing feelings and opinions becomes a weapon, communication hurts others instead of making things shalom again.

When the best of our brain and spirit are in shalom we are open, interested, flexible, self-reflective and use all our senses. We work to have the other person collaborate with us to reach understanding. We receive, process, respond, explore, understand and join.[1] When we lose shalom our brain suspends the best brain and relational functions:[2]

To avoid hurt, tragedy, regret, relapse and loss, here is a basic checklist to see if your relational circuits are on - whether you are alone or in an intimate relationship. Of course, the best part is that there are some specific steps you can take to start your relational circuits going once again. These are taught in the Thriving Recover Your Life materials www.thrivingrecovery.org and THRIVE www.thrivetoday.org as well as some material on www.kclehman.com. You will be amazed how much better you feel when your brain is running and not just your mouth or emotions.

Not everyone has the same experience with relational circuits. Some people will recognize that they rarely have these circuits on in their adult life. Those who need to start waking up their relational circuits will need lots of practice. You may also need focused ministry times for some blockages that are particularly resistant.

[1] Page 89 *Parenting From The Inside Out* by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell. [2] Page 159 *Parenting From The Inside Out* by Daniel Siegel and Mary Hartzell

Self reflection	*SUSPENDED* Now I don't see my part and what is possible for me.
Attunement	*SUSPENDED* Now I don't feel like anyone connects with me.
Mindsight	*SUSPENDED* Now I don't feel like I have a friend in the world.

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General signs that my relational circuits are OFF

- ☐ I just want to make a problem, person or feeling stop and go away.
- ☐ My mind is "locked onto" something upsetting.
- ☐ I think, say, repeat a word, phrase, cliché or thought that is negative, insulting or profane.
- ☐ I feel like screaming, name-calling or threatening (or I do).
- ☐ I strongly want to retaliate.
- ☐ I determine the only acceptable response that someone else can give me.
- ☐ I just want to get away, or fight or I freeze.[4]
- ☐ I become aggressive in the way I interrogate, judge and fix others.
- ☐ Interrogate – I ask aggressive questions about my hunch or fear of what someone is thinking, doing or feeling while looking for a particular response.
- ☐ Judge – I use my questions to expose the things I disapprove or will use to prove myself right or win.
- ☐ Fix – I already know what I want them to do or say and use my questions (talking with them) to get my way or reach my goal.
- ☐ I feel like it is their fault if they get hurt. (They asked for it. They should just get out of my way. They should have thought of that!)
- ☐ I don't feel like listening to what others are feelings, saying or going to say. When others are talking, I am already figuring out what to say before they even finish.
- ☐ I don't want to make eye contact.
- ☐ I would rather just handle problems myself.
- ☐ People are a bother and/or get in my way.

If my answers are YES, then my relational circuits are OFF.

Additional questions to see if my relational circuits are ON when I am alone

- ☐ I see this moment as a new situation where I can learn something. (It does not feel like a bad place I have been before.)
- ☐ I can reflect on myself (not just my hurts).
- ☐ I think of others who would understand me well if they were here now. (I am not struggling with feeling isolated and alone.)
- ☐ I am eager to talk with God about this situation. I want to encourage others to be helpful.

If I cannot check YES then my relational connection circuits are OFF or weak.

Additional questions to see if my relational circuits are ON with people I do not know (well)

- ☐ I can be respectful.
- ☐ I am aware and interested in their point of view.
- ☐ I am open to understanding what they are feeling right now.
- ☐ I am aware of my own feelings and responses without having to blurt them out.
- ☐ I can join in give-and-take both verbally and nonverbally.
- ☐ I can help them make their points more clearly understandable. They will agree with my description because it does not make them look stupid.
- ☐ I can understand and accept it if they make a choice I do not like.

If I cannot check YES then my relational connection circuits are OFF or weak.

Additional questions to see if my relational circuits are ON with people I know well

- ☐ Do my good memories of them seem important right now?
- ☐ Do I feel connected to _____ (someone I usually like)?
- ☐ Do I feel a desire to be connected to _____ (someone I usually like)?
- ☐ Do I experience him/her as a relational being?
- ☐ Am I aware of his/her care for me?
- ☐ Do I feel compassion about what he/she's thinking and feeling?
- ☐ Am I open to share their distressing feelings with them to help them return to joy?
- ☐ Do I perceive the presence of _____ (someone I usually like) as a resource?
- ☐ Am I experiencing joy in being with him/her?

If I cannot check YES then my relational connection circuits are OFF or weak.

EVERYTHING with respect to my relational conflicts, urges and cravings will turn out better once my relational circuits are back on.

Resource:

<https://immanuelconnection.wordpress.com/overview/4-steps-interactive-gratitude/>